

# Community Water Fluoridation

Community water fluoridation continues to be the most cost-effective, equitable and safe means to provide protection from tooth decay in a community.

Vice Admiral Richard Carmona, MD, MPH, FACS,  
2002-2006



2009

## Tooth Decay: A Public Health Problem

- Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood.
- In SC, over 1/2 of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade children have experienced tooth decay.
- In the US, 9 out of 10 adults have experienced tooth decay.
- 1 out of 3 older adults suffer from untreated tooth decay.

## Prevention Works

- Fluoride prevents tooth decay and builds healthy teeth.
- Fluoride is nature's cavity fighter, a safe and naturally occurring element found in all water sources.
- Water fluoridation adjusts the amount of fluoride in a community's water to the best level that prevents cavities.
- Medical and dental authorities endorse fluoridated water, which has been safely consumed by the public for nearly 60 years.
- Community water fluoridation benefits everyone, those who cannot afford dental care.



## Water Fluoridation Saves Money

For most cities, every \$1 invested in community water fluoridation saves \$38 in dental treatment costs. Through fluoridation, communities can improve the oral health of their residents and save money for us all.



# How is South Carolina doing?

In 2008, 95% of the people living in South Carolina on public water systems received fluoridated water. This exceeds the Healthy People 2010 goal of 75%.

## DHEC Training for Water Systems Operators

DHEC's Bureau of Water and the Division of Oral Health offer training to water system operators based on the CDC's *Water Fluoridation: Principles and Practices* Training.

## South Carolina Environmental Training Center

Includes a water fluoridation component in the Water Treatment and Water Distribution Operator Training Courses.

## Water Fluoridation Reporting Systems (WFRS)

CDC's WFRS program was initiated in SC in 2005. Through this program, the Fluoridation Coordinator records data from the Water Systems' Monitoring Reports and submits the data to WFRS on a monthly basis.

## My Water's Fluoride

CDC's website, *My Water's Fluoride*, provides consumers with basic information about their public water system including the fluoride level. Access at: <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/MWF/Index.asp>

## CDC Water Fluoridation Quality Awards

Each year DHEC presents the CDC award to SC water systems that adjust the fluoride in drinking water, achieving a monthly average fluoride level that is within the optimal range for 12 months in a year. This award represents a high level of operator care and accomplishment.

## EdVenture Children's Museum

Placed signs: "Nature's way to prevent tooth decay...drink water with fluoride" at the water fountains.

## Water Fluoridation Education and Advocacy

DHEC, the Oral Health Coalition, and the SC Dental Association work together to develop local oral health advocates.

## South Carolina Water Fluoridation Mini-Grant Program

The mini-grant program, funded through SC's DHEC CDC Cooperative Agreement has been conducted annually since 2005. The program has provided the following water systems grants for the replacement of fluoridation equipment: Lamar, Westminster, Pickens, Bennettsville, Gaffney, Easley, West Columbia, Georgetown, Greenwood, Rock Hill, Florence and Spartanburg.

**Access the DHEC Website for more information:**  
<http://www.scdhec.gov/health/mch/oral/index.htm>